of the Court, and especially the impatience of the soldiers, obtain a greater hold over his mind. Perhaps he feels some slight jealousy of the popularity of his son, who flatters the passions of the Pan-Germans. The Emperor and his Chief of the Staff may-have wished to induce the King of the Belgians not to make any opposition in the event of a conflict between us. Whatever the object of the conversation, the revelation is one of extreme gravity. We must -keep our powder dry."

In the following months Baron Beyens, the Belgian Minister, noticed that William n was becoming less friendly to French visitors. " I have often held out my hand to France/' he remarked at a Court ball in February, 1914, "and she has replied with kicks. They had better take care at Paris, for I shall not always be here." Colonel House, visiting Berlin in May, 1914, with a view to an Anglo-German-American Entente, was appalled by the militarism which surrounded the ruler. " The whole of Germany is charged with electricity," he reported. " Everybody's nerves are tense. It only needs a spark to set the whole thing off." Meanwhile a new series of unfortunate incidents fanned the flame. When a Zeppelin descended at Luneville, Frenchmen believed that it had come to spy; and when some commercial travellers were molested at Nancy there was an outburst in the Reichstag, only partially appeased by the dismissal of the Prefect. Though the desire for war with France or anybody else was confined to a small section of the German population, which did not include the Kaiser, the Chancellor 'or the Foreign Secretary, there was no instinctive shrinking from a conflict and very little anxiety as to its result. Since Moltke's victories the invincibility of German arms had been an article of faith.

The atmosphere in France, though less neurotically excited, contained explosive elements. " The British attitude in 1911," reported the Belgian Minister at Paris in October, 1912, " caused a revulsion of feeling. To say that the French nation has become bellicose would be going too far. The agriculturist, the bourgeois, the merchant, the industrialist know what a conflagration would cost them; yet the country is confident of success. We.must count with the turbulent youth and the military. The men at the head of affairs are sincerely pacific, but their action is excessive. It is good to restore to a nation its dignity but dangerous to foster its chauvinism. They began by military parades and marching through Paris. The visit of the Grand Duke Nichoks excited